

National Veterans Wheelchair Games



Athlete Profile (National)

Russell Worth – He Just Keeps Going!



Some may compare Wisconsin veteran Russell Worth to the Energizer bunny – he just keeps going and going and going. This will be Worth's 15th year attending the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, being held this time in Omaha, Nebraska. Worth says, "Every year I look forward to the competition, seeing a new city and the camaraderie of the event." A World War II Navy and Army Air Corps veteran, Worth, 84, of Brown Deer, Wisconsin, had always been active in softball and bowling prior to his 1991 injury in a car crash in St. Louis. The accident occurred while he was driving home from his job as a building inspector in University City, when the suspension unit on the rear of Worth's car snapped. After losing control of the vehicle, he was tossed from the driver's seat over a ten-foot embankment. Landing on the frozen ground, he broke all of his ribs as well as his back. He returned to his home town of Milwaukee after he was injured to be closer to his family.

For the last two years, Worth was the oldest athlete at the Wheelchair Games, but it didn't seem to faze him. "I was 67 when the accident happened and was still very active," he said. "I was determined not to let this slow me down." It hasn't. Since he became a paraplegic he has tried parasailing and even learned to ski at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. At the event this past April, Worth received a special award to recognize his determination, stamina and tremendous spirit.

Worth still lives in an apartment on his own and works out two days each week at the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee, where he receives care. He volunteers with the medical center's incentive therapy program and also serves as a peer counselor in its spinal cord injury unit, helping other veterans with similar injuries. As if that wasn't enough to keep a person busy, he also sits on the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America. In his spare time, Worth enjoys watching his grandchildren, especially when they are playing softball and hardball.

Many of his fellow wheelchair athletes see Russell Worth as a true inspiration. Being the modest man that he is though, he says, "It is important to have a good attitude and keep busy." He does that every day as he just keeps going and going and going – inspiring everyone around him to do the same.